

BACKGROUND OF THE DISARMAMENT PROBLEM

1. Prior to World War I no real progress was made toward the limitation of armaments. The Hague Conferences tried to "humanize" war by attempting to ban the use of certain types of weapons, dum dum bullets, poison gas, projectiles thrown from balloons, etc., etc. Such agreements proved to be unenforceable and a mere trap for the trusting.

2. After World War I conditions seemed ideal for a renewed effort to limit armaments. The victorious Allied coalition was supreme. Germany was disarmed in fact, and limited by Treaty. Russia was as yet no menace and was preaching total disarmament. Yet, even under these conditions the attempt to reach international agreement on the limitation of armaments was a failure, except in the very limited field--limited both as to time and types--of Naval armaments.

Even friendly former allies could not agree on satisfactory definitions of military manpower or of various types of weapons as a basis for limitation. The United States and Britain had profound disagreements in their attempts to equate a 10,000 ton, 8 inch gun cruiser against a 6,000 ton, 6 inch gun cruiser. In the field of aircraft there was no clear common denominator. Thousands of man hours were spent in arguing how to evaluate trained reserves against standing armies and paramilitary units against regular soldiers.

SECRET

The argument as to what arms were distinctly defensive and hence permissible as against those arms which were offensive and subject to limitation were totally inconclusive over the decade preceding 1933 and Hitler's accession to power.

While Nazi maneuvers were the ostensible cause for the failure of the disarmament conferences of this decade, the real reasons were deeper. We were trying to force into the pattern of an international agreement, elements too complicated to be the subject of such agreements. To be effective international agreements must not be so complicated that their enforcement breeds controversy and suspicion. Most of the agreements attempted during the pre-Hitler decade failed to meet this test.

3. Since World War II the technical side of disarmament has become vastly more complicated than it was even after World War I. Weapons have assumed new intricacy, new elements of secrecy, and vastly increased power. At the same time the political situation has worsened to a point where little, if any, trust can be placed in the good faith of the Communists to carry out written agreements. As a result, we now demand complete inspection of performance or the type of agreements which provide for mutual and simultaneous performance. The latter type is well nigh excluded by the very nature of the disarmament problem and control and inspection, as we mean it, is excluded by Soviet objection.

4. For some five years no international agreements of even the most simple character have been reached between the U. S. and the Soviet. Those reached with them during the period 1945 - 1947 are today largely dead letters. In the present political situation it is unthinkable that we could now negotiate an understanding of broad scope in this most intricate field of negotiation, namely arms limitation, a field where, in the past, even close international friends have failed of agreement. At best political agreements must precede disarmament agreements and the latter, even if the proper political atmosphere is established, must be kept simple and, as far as possible, self-executory and self-policing.

5. From the above it is fair to conclude that any disarmament agreements of the conventional type - i.e., as discussed in the World War II period are not within the realm of practicality. Even proposals like the Baruch Plan or along the lines recently suggested in the UN for the limitation of armed forces are not attainable.

6. In view of the popular yearning in the free countries--probably reflected also by the peoples even in Soviet Russia and the Satellites--it may be necessary, as a measure of psychological warfare, to adopt a posture of willingness - and possibly even of inventiveness - in proposing new schemes for disarmament. It is possible, however, that in what we have already done in the UN we have pushed psychological warfare in this field as far as it can go. Further public

~~SECRET~~

Security Information

debates may lead to the conclusion that our proposals are propaganda motivated. It may be therefore that the time has come, in the UN debates, to summarize our efforts, to endeavor to fix responsibility for failure to make progress, and to bring to an end a wholly futile and almost stultifying argument that no longer fools anybody. This however is a psychological warfare matter. The Panel was not chosen for expert advice in this field and has no particular competence to give such advice. We can only express our own opinion that further public debate of the disarmament problem in the UN is likely to be mere propaganda and that those who are competent to deal with the international effect of propaganda should advise on the procedures.

7. The fact that the somewhat formalized, publicized and conventional approach to the disarmament problem has proved futile and should be left to the psychological warfare experts does not necessarily lead and should not lead, to the abandonment of all efforts in this field. The issues are far too grave and the stakes too high to leave any avenues unexplored. This review of the past, however, fairly justifies the conclusion that the old approaches are shopworn; that new ones are necessary.

* * *

8. If we are to attack the armaments problem with any hope of making real progress, the focal point to attack is of course atomic weapons. It would be relatively futile, as indicated above, to

Information

resume the debate on limiting conventional armaments even if the unreality of this approach were not highlighted by the fact that if war breaks out atomic and possibly thermonuclear weapons are likely to be the most important weapons in the arsenal of each opposing camp.

Theoretically of course one could concentrate a disarmament study on the means of delivery of atomic and thermonuclear weapons. This however seems a roundabout and ineffective method of approach. Obviously no one is going to spend billions on atomic and thermonuclear weapons and not attempt to deliver them whatever restrictions are placed on the instruments of delivery. Furthermore, these instruments are varied and numerous and not in all cases necessarily military instruments, *vis cargo ships*.

Another important reason for concentrating our attention on the atomic-thermonuclear field is the fact that these weapons present a peculiar threat to the free world. This reality has possibly been obscured by the present public obsession with the view, real but transitory, that our atomic superiority is the best insurance of peace.

Finally, the atomic field introduces certain new factors which were not considered by the disarmers of the post World War I era and it may be that there are fresh elements, despite the study by the Baruch Committee, which present a new handle to the disarmament problem.

~~SECRET~~

Controlled Information

In connection with the above the following seem to be reasonable assumptions to make:

- a. Today the U.S. has a substantial numerical superiority in atomic weapons over the Soviet and a superior ability over the Soviet to deliver these bombs, leaving aside for the moment the question of the respective air defense of the two areas.
- b. We have the ability to keep a numerical superiority over the Soviet in A and H bombs for a considerable period but the practical value of this superiority will decrease and approach the vanishing point as the numbers of Soviet bombs and means of conveyance reaches adequacy in terms of their appropriate targets.
- c. In the light of our present progress and the limited number of appropriate Soviet A & H bomb targets we will reach the adequacy point well before the Soviet and until the Soviet reaches that point we may have a period of relative immunity from the danger of atomic war. Of course the determination of the adequacy point is a very finite determination open to error as neither can accurately assess the stockpiles or defenses of the other party. Neither can either side compute to what extent a surprise all-out attack by one side if directed against the other's bases of atomic, as well as against industrial targets, might cripple the retort of the other.

TOP SECRET

Classified Information

d. Once each side has reached the adequacy point there may be a period of uneasy stability - of uncertain duration but if political and other agreements are not reached in the meantime then a spark might set off a war of mutual suicide.

e. It is in our interest to prolong as far as possible the period during which we are closer to adequacy than the Soviet in the hope that in the intervening period political changes in the Soviet will lead to the political agreements necessary to real disarmament discussions.

f. This period of free world supremacy will be prolonged substantially if the race could be limited to atomic bombs and the Soviet do not acquire thermonuclear weapons. With the latter the Soviet would more quickly reach the goal of adequacy and would then enjoy a relative advantage since they would have at their disposal many more thermonuclear targets in the free world than we would have of such targets in the Soviet world.

* * *

9. GENERAL CONCLUSIONS

What has been said above both with regard to the field of conventional and atomic-nuclear weapons leads to the following conclusions:

a. Both past history and recent performance show that public discussion and public negotiation for agreements on

SECRET

Security Information

conventional disarmament will lead nowhere in the present political climate and if pursued at all should be pursued from the point of view of psychological warfare and world public opinion.

- b. Our lead in the atomic race is a temporary advantage to be prolonged in any way possible but is an advantage which will be wiped out at some future date, probably not too far distant, when the Soviet have "enough" bombs.
- c. An H bomb race will be still more to our disadvantage than the A bomb race as it will narrow the time before the Soviet has "enough" weapons of mass destruction.
- d. Accordingly, all efforts should be bent to preventing an H bomb race if there is any way of doing it.